

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

SPC-03 SS-20 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 DRC-01 /103 W

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7635

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON PRIORITY

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 7614

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, ELAB, SP

SUBJECT: SITUATION FOLLOWING PRIME MINISTER'S ASSASSINATION

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. POLITICAL ATTENTION BEGINNING TO BE FOCUSED ON COUNCIL OF REALM ELECTION OF TERNA FOR NEXT PRESIDENT OF GOVERNMENT, TO TAKE PLACE WITHIN TEN DAYS. LEADING CONTENDER IS ACTING PRESIDENT FERNANDEZ MIRANDA, ALTHOUGH VARIOUS OTHER NAMES ALSO RUMORED AS POSSIBILITIES. OTHER DEVELOPMENTS WERE CARRERO FUNERAL WHICH FRANCO SURPRISINGLY DID NOT ATTEND, AND CONTINUATION OF "CARABANCHEL" TEN" TRIAL. END SUMMARY.

2. IMMEDIATELY AFTER CARRERO BLANCO'S ASSASSINATION, VICE PRESIDENT TORCUATO FERNANDEZ MIRANDA WAS SWORN IN AS ACTING PRESIDENT OF GOVERNMENT ON DEC 20, AS PROVIDED BY CONSTITUTION.

3. UNDER SPAIN'S CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS, CHIEF OF STATE MUST NOW CONVOKE COUNCIL OF THE REALM WITHIN 10 DAYS REPORTEDLY INTERPRETED AS TEN WORKING DAYS. COUNCIL OF THE REALM WILL
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THEN SELECT A SLATE OF THREE CANDIDATES (TERNA) FROM WHOM CHIEF OF STATE WILL PICK NEW PRESIDENT OF GOVERNMENT.

4. THERE MUCH SPECULATION AS TO WHOM FRANCO WILL SELECT FROM THREE PROPOSED NAMES AS PRESIDENT OF GOVERNMENT. OBVIOUS LEADING CONTENDER IS FERNANDEZ MIRANDA, WHO HAS UP TO NOW BEEN VICE PRESIDENT. DESIGNATION OF FERNANDEZ MIRANDA WOULD GIVE IMPRESSION OF MAXIMUM CONTINUITY IN GOVERNMENT AT THIS DIFFICULT TIME. FERNANDEZ MIRANDA'S NAME LIKELY TO BE ON TERNA, AND WILL CERTAINLY BE SHOULD FRANCO LET IT BE KNOWN THAT THIS IS HIS DESIRE. OTHER POSSIBLE CANDIDATES ARE FORMER INFORMATION MINISTER FRAGA (WHO RECEIVED SECOND HIGHEST NUMBER OF VOTES AFTER CARRERO IN TERNA PRESENTED BY COUNCIL OF REALM LAST JUNE), ONE-TIME LABOR MINISTER GIRON(WHO HAS WIDE FOLLOWING AMONG FALANGIST SECTORS BUT WHO HAS RECENTLY MADE APERTURISTA STATEMENTS), CORTES PRESIDENT VALCARCEL (ALTHOUGH HE WOULD HAVE TO RESIGN HIS POSITION ON COUNCIL OF REALM IN ORDER TO BE ON TERNA), ONE-TIME MOVEMENT MINISTER FERNANDEZ CUESTA (WHO WAS THIRD PERSON ON LAST JUNE'S TERNA), GENERAL DIEZ- ALEGRIA (SHOULD A MILITARY MAN BE DESIRED), AND FOREIGN MINISTER LOPEZ-RODO.

5. SELECTION OF NEW PRESIDENT OF GOVERNMENT ALSO MEANS APPOINTMENT OF A NEW CABINET. MOST CABINET MINISTERS EXPECTED TO REMAIN AT THIS TIME, AGAIN FOR REASONS OF GIVING IMPRESSION OF CONTINUITY. THIS PARTICULARLY TRUE IF FERNANDEZ MIRANDA REMAINS AS PRESIDENT. HOWEVER, SHOULD SOMEONE ELSE BE DESIGNATED, MORE NEW FACES IN CABINET ARE LIKELY.

6. MEANWHILE, INTERESTING DEVELOPMENT TODAY WAS GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENT GENERAL FRANCO WOULD NOT ATTEND FUNERAL OF CARRERO BLANCO, DUE TO LIGHT CASE OF FLU. HOWEVER, FRANCO WAS ABLE TO RECEIVE AT PARDO TODAY VICE PRESIDENT FORD AND PORTUGUESE PREMIER CAETANO, WHO WERE HERE FOR FUNERAL. HE ALSO PRESIDED OVER CABINET MEETING AT PARDO. POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS FRANCO'S ABSENCE AT FUNERAL OF LONG-TIME CLOSEST COLLABORATOR ARE (1) FRANCO MAY HAVE BEEN SO MOVED BY LOSS THAT HE WANTED TO AVOID ANY PUBLIC SHOW OF EMOTION AT FUNERAL;
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OR (2) SECURITY MOTIVATION TO AVOID FRANCO CONGREGATING WITH FUNERAL CROWDS.

7. FRANCO APPEARED ALERT AND IN FAIRLY GOOD PHYSICAL CONDITION DURING MEETING WITH VICE PRESIDENT FORD, IN CONTRAST WITH HIS APPEARANCE DURING MEETING WITH SECRETARY KISSINGER TWO DAYS AGO. VICE PRESIDENT ALSO MET WITH PRINCE JUAN CARLOS, WHO APPEARED TO BE DEEPLY MOVED BY CARRERO'S DEATH.

8. FUNERAL ITSELF TOOK ON APPEARANCE OF A PRO-REGIME DEMONSTRATION AS VAST CROWDS BEHIND CORTEGE SHOUTING FRANCO, FRANCO". MANY OF THEM GAVE FALANGIST SALUTE AND SANG "CARA AL SOL". SOME GROUPS CARRIED NUMEROUS PLACARDS WITH SUCH SLOGANS AS "DOWN WITH COMMUNISTS", "COMMUNIST ASSASSINS", AND CALLING FOR "GOVERNMENT OF AUTHORITY". AMONG FOREIGN DIGNITARIES AT FUNERAL WERE MINISTERS FROM FRANCE, MOROCCO. U.K. AND FRG IN ADDITION TO PRESIDENT CAETANO AND VICE PRESIDENT FORD.

9. GENERAL ATMOSPHERE HAS RESUMED MORE OF AN AIR OF RELATIVE NORMALITY. THERE INCREASING PRESS SPECULATION ASSASSINATION PERPETRATED BY WELL-ORGANIZED GROUP SUCH AS PERHAPS ETA. (A SUPPOSED ETA SPOKESMAN IN BOYONNE HAS REPORTEDLY CLAIMED CREDIT, WHILE ANOTHER ETA SPOKESMAN IN FRANCE HAS REPORTEDLY DENIED ETA INVOLVEMENT). MEANWHILE "CARABANCHEL TEN" TRIAL (REPORTED SEPTEL), PROCEEDING TODAY AND LIKELY TO CONCLUDE AFTER THIS AFTERNOON'S SESSION.

10. THIS AFTERNOON'S PRESS CARRIES REPORT YOUNG, SERIOUSLY WOUNDED PERSON WAS DETAINED WHO MAY BE ONE OF PERPETRATORS OF PRIME MINISTER'S ASSASSINATION.
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